



## **BBUFA Safeguarding Policy**

Bexhill and Battle Under Fives Association Ltd (BBUFA) plans to provide an environment which ensures children are safe from potential abuse and will respond to any suspicion of potential abuse in a way which respects the child's rights and reinforces the adult's responsibilities to the children. All board members, staff members and volunteers understand and recognise that they have a clear duty to protect the children in their care and to act at all times to uphold this.

In order to do this we:

- Ensure that all adults working in the setting (voluntary or paid) are aware of the fact that such work is exempt from the provision laid down in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Provide a comprehensive recruitment policy which requires all potential workers to attend a panel interview where gaps and/or inconsistencies in employment are checked. All employees have full ID and reference checks prior to appointment. Full CRB checks are obtained for each employee and no employee will have unsupervised access to children until these are obtained. We also require all employees to work for a probationary period.
- Provide an induction programme for new members of staff which contains a comprehensive section on child protection which includes outlining the various forms of abuse and the procedure to follow in the incident of suspected or reported abuse.
- Offer on going training to all adults, involved with the care and education of children, which will help them to recognise and respond to suspected abuse of children whether physical, emotional, sexual or as a result of neglect.
- Have a designated person to whom all concerns will be referred. Our safeguarding officer (SO) is Helen Atkin and she can be contacted on 07732 555036. The safeguarding officer will receive additional child protection training at regular intervals to ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date with current issues and developments.
- Ensure all adults know who to contact within the setting and what to do if that person does not carry out their responsibility for the child's well being.
- Provide planned and appropriate activities that will enable children to develop an understanding of personal safety, and opportunities to express their fears and anxieties.
- Never allow an unregistered adult to be alone with a child or children.
- Have clearly set out procedures which all adults will be aware of to respond to concerns of suspected abuse.
- Recognise that parents should always be involved in the monitoring of children's behaviour or development and should be the first point of contact (except in the case of sexual abuse).
- Keep an ongoing record of observations of significant changes in children's behaviour or appearance which will be written down and kept confidential.
- Work with Children Social Care, the Police and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure the child's best interests are met.
- We will, wherever possible, continue to support and work with the child's family to maintain continuity of care for the child.
- Keep confidential records - all details of concerns, progress, case conferences etc. are confidential and will not be discussed with anyone not authorised to have this information.

### **Contact telephone numbers**

#### **Duty & Assessment Team**

01424 724144 – Hastings and Rother

01323 747373 – West of the county including Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford

Out of Office Hours - 01273 819179 or 335906 (You can call this number: Monday to Friday, 5pm to midnight (from 4.30pm on Friday), on the weekend, on a bank holiday.

If you call between midnight and 8am, phone: 01273 819179

## **Procedure for how to deal with a comment that a child has made which gives cause for concern or a full disclosure of abuse;**

### **Do's**

- **Listen** and treat any allegations seriously, ensuring that the child understands that you believe what they are saying and confirming that they are right to bring this to your attention and talking about it to a responsible adult.
- **Reassure** the child that they are in no way to blame for the actions of others and tell them of the next steps and why you may be informing others (Safeguarding officer).
- **Record** – making precise notes on your conversation with the child, date and time the report and include actions taken.
- **Take appropriate action** – passing the information onto the Safeguarding officer immediately.
- **Seek support** – never deal with a disclosure alone, always seek support and guidance from the Safeguarding officer.

### **Don't**

- **Promise not to tell anyone** – you will need to share a child protection concern with the Safeguarding officer
- **Ask leading questions** – this could jeopardise later court actions
- **Express doubt or disbelief** – reassure the child that they were right to tell you
- **Interrogate the child** - it is not your place to do so, this must be carried out by a suitably qualified professional, ie from Children's Social Care or the Police.
- **Assume someone else will deal with it** – always act! You may be the only person this child has shared this information with.

## **Procedure for Suspected Abuse**

Where a concern is expressed about a child in a setting or an activity due to;

- Significant change in their behaviour
- Deterioration in their general well-being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse
- Neglect

The following steps will be followed;

1. Child's behaviour/appearance gives rise to concern.
2. Record observations, ensure medical attention is provided (if required) bring concerns to the setting / activity leader at soon as possible and no later than by the end of the session.
3. Contact the nominated BBUFA Safeguarding Officer, to discuss the situation - this must be done during the session/ activity or by no later than the end of the day. Depending on the nature and the seriousness of the concern the SO, in consultation with the session/ activity leader, will make the decision to either;
  - a. Obtain further information – consulting with others within the team, partners and parents where appropriate.
  - b. Monitor situation – where this is the agreed course of action the monitoring period must be time limited, appropriate and with a review date.
  - c. Refer directly to Children's Social care (and the police - if a criminal act has occurred)
4. Where a referral is to be made, the SO in consultation with the session/activity leader will discuss the concern with the parent/carer and seek agreement for the referral- unless, in the case of significant harm, where the delay to seek agreement to refer may result in further harm to the child or where sexual abuse is suspected.
5. Records will be kept confidentially and only shared with authorised others, on a need to know basis. A telephone referral to Children's Social Care will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.

## **Allegation Management**

### **Procedure to follow following an allegation or concern about a member of staff or volunteer who has;**

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has or may have harmed a child or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

### **Initial action by the person receiving or identifying an allegation or concern**

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

He or she should not:

- investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification;
- make assumptions or offer alternative explanations; or
- promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis

He or she should:

- make a written record of the information (where possible in the child/adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident(s), persons present and what was said;
- sign and date the written record; and
- immediately report the matter to the Safeguarding officer or the board where the SO is the subject of the allegation.

### **Initial action by the SO**

When informed of a concern or allegation, the SO should not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, child concerned or potential witnesses.

He/she should:

- obtain written details of the concern/allegation, signed and dated by the person who received the allegation (not the child/adult making the allegation);
- countersign and date the written details;
- record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and
- names of any potential witnesses; and
- record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
- SO to inform the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations Management (LADO) on 01323 466606 immediately who will advise on how to proceed to the next stage. This will be either to deal with in within the settings disciplinary procedures or within a multi agency approach
- If the parents/carers of the child concerned are not already aware of the allegation the LADO will also advise how and by whom they should be informed.
- SO to inform the accused person about the allegation and suspend them on full pay (LADO will agree what information can be disclosed to the person)
- In addition to the LADO SO to inform Ofsted of the allegations (as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made)
- SO to keep board informed at all stages

### **Dealing with allegations with settings disciplinary procedures**

- The reasoning and advice given by the LADO will be recorded
- The timescales set out in 'Procedures for Working Together to Safeguard Children' and in settings disciplinary procedures must be complied with – appropriate action taken within 3 working days in non formal disciplinary or within 15 working days if disciplinary hearing is required
- The SO will inform the LADO and Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation
- Records will be kept on the appropriate forms in the organisations confidential files and retained for 10 years (or until the accused normal retirement age is reached, whichever is the sooner).

## Dealing with allegation with multi agency approach

- Where the LADO decides the allegation needs to proceed to an allegations strategy meeting/discussion s/he will convene this in accordance with guidance set out in 'Procedures for Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- If it is decided at the strategy meeting/discussion that either the police and/or children's social care are to undertake enquiries or investigations the progress of these enquiries should be reported back to the employer and the LADO.
- At the completion of the police and or children's social care investigations the final strategy discussion should:
  - Ensure that the accused staff member/vol has been informed of the outcome
  - Enable the investigation officer an opportunity to summarise the actions taken, people interviewed and
  - Offer a professional judgement on whether the allegation fell into one of the following categories;

**Substantiated** – one which is supported or established by evidence or proof

**Unsubstantiated** – not the same as a false allegation. It simply means that there is insufficient identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. It does not imply guilt or innocence.

**Unfounded** – this indicates that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively they may not have been aware of all the circumstances. For an allegation to be classified as unfounded, it will be necessary to have evidence to disprove the allegation.

**Deliberately invented or malicious** - This implies a deliberate act to deceive. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence, which proves this intention.

- This information should be recorded and given as a written record to the employer and the LADO.

At all times BBUFA will seek to keep the member of staff/vol informed about the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process.

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

When dealing with an allegation the SO will refer to 'Appendix 5 – Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children' and 'LSCB 8.21 Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children' for further information and guidance.